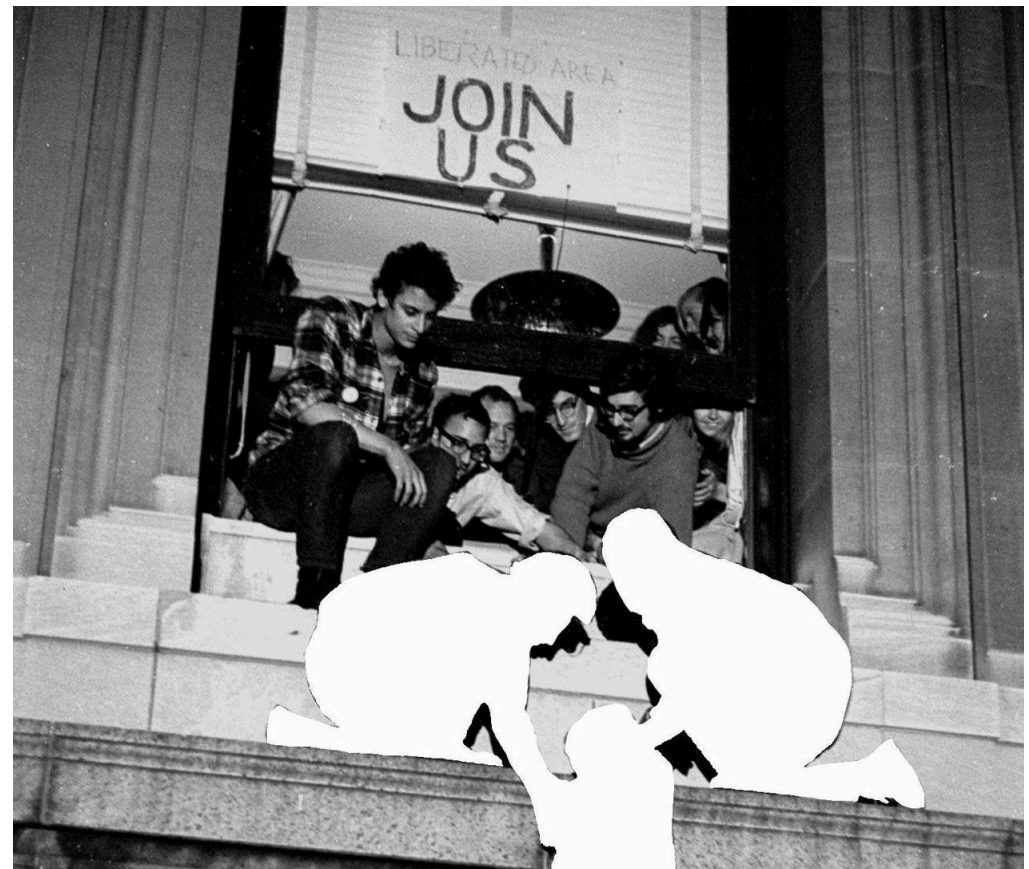


Americans are not immune from resistance. White people, students, and other privileged people do not have the right to stand by "in solidarity" with liberation struggles here and abroad, cheering them on without sharing any of their risks. Still, we cannot chide and ridicule those who have yet to embrace militant struggle. Forms of resistance must be arranged to protagonize today's bystanders, spectators, onlookers, and fence-sitters. While they may not form the core of any serious resistance, and they may not be relied on to conduct necessary tasks and roles within a revolutionary organization and movement, it is from their ranks that an insurrection will actually recruit and depend. In order to do this, organizers will have to reject frameworks that require ongoing informed consent among participants, ultra-democratic orientations which divide action into "risk-based" roles and segments, and other forms of scripted and organized activist choreography. They will have to embrace street fighting, pitched battles, barricades, rock-throwing, and highway blockades as their general strategy. These are not the only forms resistance can take, but without them, no other methods can retain their meaning or dignity any longer.



THE STUDENT INTIFADA AND THE REVOLUTION TO COME



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with whatever weapons at hand



On October 7, 2023, guerrillas from Palestinian resistance organizations, led by Harakat al-Muqawama al-Islamiya (transl. "Islamic resistance movement"), or Hamas for short, launched a coordinated attack on the Israeli border along the Gaza strip. Using drones, firearms, and vehicles, these guerrillas (who are mostly armed civilian volunteers) overwhelmed the border fence on the anniversary of the 1973 October War. As the fence was breached, many young Palestinians flooded across the borders of the camp and into settlements alongside the wall.

What followed is subject to much debate, and will continue to be for some time. Many people, soldiers and civilians, were killed in the ensuing uprising. In July 2024, Haaretz revealed that the Israeli Defense Forces gave a "Hannibal directive" to soldiers in the vicinity of the breach. With this directive, Israeli soldiers were ordered to establish a "kill zone" in the area, to bombard and shoot anyone moving west toward the Gaza strip, including Israeli soldiers and civilians, in order to limit the number of hostages taken by the guerrillas or the spontaneous rebel insurgents acting in concert with them. Regardless of what is proved or disproved in the coming years, it is adequate for now to say that the events of October 7th constituted the most serious attack on the colonial occupation of Palestine by the US-backed Zionist state in several decades, and it irreparably upset the balance of forces in the region established since the end of the Second Intifada.

In the immediate aftermath of the October 7th raid, Israel (with US support) launched an indiscriminate attack on the Gaza Strip. In the ensuing months, the US-Israeli intervention displaced nearly 2 million people. As of early July 2024, Lancet estimates around 186,000 people have been killed in this Second Nakba. Unspeakable war crimes have been visited upon the Palestinian people by the occupational forces, including the willful destruction of every single school and hospital, and the intentional use of starvation and deprivation as methods of war. In the face of this gut-wrenching tragedy, for which the International Court of Justice seeks to arrest Israeli PM Benjamin Netanyahu, Palestinian guerrillas have maintained an unprecedented guerrilla war using miles of underground tunnels as well as improvised devices from all sides of the Strip, from the West Bank, and even from southern Lebanon.

Across the world, in the United States itself, Jews, Arabs, Muslims,

and students have been gripped by a deep moral crisis. Since October, tens of thousands of people have marched, demanding that the US sever military aid to the Israeli war. American Jews, especially in New York City, have spear-headed a relentless campaign of civil disobedience; sitting-in and disrupting train stations, bridges, highways, and meetings over and over again, facing beatings and arrest to obstruct the bloodbath taking place in their names. Muslims and Arabs in the diaspora have mobilized by the thousands for demonstrations and rallies time and again to oppose the unrelenting barbarism unleashed upon their families and communities in Palestine since October. In some instances, activists and rebellious groups vandalized or sabotaged the offices of banks or arms manufacturers supporting the war. On multiple occasions, shipping ports were blocked from sending arms to Israel.

Despite their moral clarity and relentless mobilization, the war continued unabated. If a US-based protest movement hoped to pressure the Biden-Harris administration to withhold financial and military aid from Israel, it could not only mobilize the friends and families of those embroiled in the conflict, especially considering that those communities do not constitute a major bloc within the US population.

The Arab American Institute reports that ethnic Arabs (registered as "White" on the US census from 1944-2024) account for 3.7 million people in the US, roughly 1.1% of the population (with 1/3 reporting as Lebanese and just .08% reporting as Palestinian.) Three quarters of Arab-Americans live in just twelve cities; over 95% live in one of 6 major metropolitan areas. According to the Pew Research Center, there are roughly 7.5 million Jews in the US (including people who do not identify as Jewish but who have at least one Jewish parent), roughly 2.4% of the US population, with Jews accounting for no more than 8.5% of New York City, and a significantly lower percentage everywhere else. Another Pew study shows there are about 3.5 million Muslims in the country, accounting for 1.1% of the overall population. Combined, that is 4.6% of the country. If every single person from one of those groups aimed to demonstrate or resist the war somehow, that would be around 15 million people, certainly enough to catalyze a state of emergency within the US.

According to a YouGov poll conducted on May 3, 75% of US Muslims support the protests against Israel, and only 18% of US Jews. If every

government, the military launched a coup. Labor strikes including health workers, teachers, transportation workers, and miners spread across the country. Thousands marched through the streets of Yangon and other major cities banging pots and donning red ribbons, red being associated with the National League for Democracy party who the military obstructed from assuming office. Crowds sang songs from the 1988 Uprising. A number of students have fled the cities, taking clandestine routes to join military organizations in the mountains and countryside. Medical students now operate makeshift clinics for rebel groups and teachers find themselves in the ranks of guerillas, using Youtube to learn the art of bomb making. As of August 2024, half of the country is under the control of the guerrillas.

Shah was deposed and the Ayatollah Khomeini came to power, a number of these groups came out in opposition to the newly formed Islamic Republic, bringing thousands into the streets with them.

Myanmar

In 1988, students in Myanmar launched a mass movement against General Ne Win, who had ruled the country for 26 years. In 1987, students demonstrated against new fiscal policies making it harder to pay tuition. In 1988, student demonstrations took a dramatic turn after a young student was killed by the police. Demonstrations followed at the Rangoon Institute of Technology (now Yangon Technological University) and Rangoon University (now Yangon Technological University) leading to military-led raids and closures of campuses. On March 16, soldiers abused student demonstrators, shooting at them, and drowning them in Inya Lake.

When campuses reopened in the summer of 1988, protests resumed. On June 20th, Yangon University was closed down again but it was too late. Thousands of workers, monks, and students joined in the streets. Police fired on demonstrators who fought back, resulting in casualties on both sides. On July 23, 1988, General Ne Win stepped down. Hundreds of thousands marched across Myanmar in August calling for democracy. The army was deployed against them. Soldiers routinely fired on demonstrators, killing thousands. As a result, government offices and personnel became targets for the resistance. "People's Committees" were formed to take over local administration and distribution of goods. Committees built barricades in towns across the country, manned by volunteers with homemade weapons. Student organizations adopted armed struggle as a part of their program. Some fled the cities to pursue military operations in the countryside. Workers brought the economy to a halt. Student groups, veteran politicians, and popular Myanmar figures made bids for political power in the midst of the movement but after elections in 1990, the military refused to cede power. They retained control of the government until 2012.

On February 1st, 2021 after general election results confirmed that the National League for Democracy (NLD) would hold on to power in the

single Muslim and Jew that supported the anti-war protests in theory showed up to demonstrations, that would be just 4 million people (1.1% of the population), spread across a small handful of cities. Numbers don't exist for Arab support for the protests, but it's probably a fairly high percentage. If it was also around 75% sympathetic, that would bring us to 1.9% of the general population, in the same handful of locations. Assuming that only a very small percentage of any group is likely to march in the streets, even those who sympathize with protests abstractly, this provides a very small cohort of potential opponents to the war indeed, if we expect resistance to colonialism in Palestine to come from Jewish, Arab, and Muslim communities alone. But who else would join in the resistance to the war? Who could realistically be expected to do so, and when?

The answer, finally, arrived in Spring 2024: university students.

* * * * *

What follows is an essay divided into three parts. In part one, we analyze the Spring 2024 Gaza solidarity protests on university campuses, the so-called "student intifada." We offer the context of other recent protest movements, look closely at tactical decisions, and identify political impasses that the campus-based movement ultimately failed to overcome.

In part two, we rewind a few decades to re-assess the student anti-war protest of the 1960s-70s, and its relationship to Black liberation movements of the time. We believe that the alliance of those two movements created a political context of near-revolution in the United States, or at least had substantially greater transformative potential than any social movement since. We look to this creative relationship as a model for activists and aspiring revolutionaries today.

Finally, in part three, we analyze the students as a bloc of social power, and the potential they may or may not have to build a revolution. We place the Gaza solidarity encampments in dialogue with the anti-police protests of the last decade, and the Defend the Forest/Stop Cop City movement.

PART I: FIRST WE TOOK COLUMBIA

On April 17, 2024, at 4:30 am, students and faculty at Columbia University and Barnard College erected 50 tents on the East Lawn of campus. Protesters hung banners and signs denouncing the US-backed Israeli war. New York police sealed off most of the perimeter of the camp, blocking access to non-students/faculty on 116th Street. As nightfall approached, preliminary negotiations between Columbia President Minouche Shafik and the Jewish and Muslim-led encampment stalled. Several hundred protesters picketed campus from the surrounding streets as rain trickled down on them. Threats to raid and clear the camp did not materialize.

The following day, April 18, Columbia administrators sent in a large number of New York police officers to brutalize and clear the encampment, made of scarcely a few dozen tents and some folding tables. By 10am, drones hovered overhead. Public-facing campus organizers began receiving notifications on their phones: they had been suspended indefinitely for their participation in the protests. At mid-day, scores of police, accompanied by some university staff, entered the East Lawn and began destroying tents and dragging away students.

Social media exploded with shock and outrage. The raid lasted several hours while hundreds of supporters arrived on campus, angry and chanting, but still without tactical direction. A small group climbed over a fence onto the West Lawn, enjoining others to follow them. It was simple, and it worked. Students built a new camp on the Columbia University West Lawn, now with several hundred participants.

Rather than looking on in sympathetic indifference, people across the country were stunned and motivated to act. Student organizers, activists, anarchists, abolitionists, socialists, and anti-war groups held meetings, made phone calls, and prepared to launch "Gaza Solidarity Encampments" of their own. These protesters demanded that schools disclose their financial investments and sever all ties with the apartheid regime of Israel.

autocracy, this was the first mass resistance to the Regime of the Colonels. Students from the Law School were arrested and some tortured. The seal on resistance was broken and the waters of social rage rushed forth. On November 14, 1973, a student strike at the Polytechnic detonated social peace under the junta for good. Thousands of people filled the area around Exarcheia and Syntagma Square. Students took over the university and launched an uncensored radio program. For the first time since the WWII, molotov cocktails exploded in the streets, as pitched battles between police and demonstrators escalated for three days. On November 17, the military sent tanks into the Polytechnic. 24 people were killed. The protests ended, but the junta was mortally wounded. Attempts to reform the dictatorship provoked hardliners to the right of Papadapolous to stage an new coup d'etat. It was already too late. A year later, civilian rule had returned to Greece, and the old junta was standing trial.

In 1975, an urban guerrilla organization calling itself Revolutionary Organization November 17 began conducting armed attacks against authority figures associated with the dictatorship who remained in power under democracy. To this day, angry and commemorative demonstrations take place every November 17th across Greece, especially in the area surrounding the Polytechnic.

Iran

Opposition to the Shah cut across all of Iranian society but when police raided a poetry reading on November 19, 1977, organized and attended by thousands of students, the movement gained a revolutionary momentum. Clashes ensued and one student was killed. Demonstrations and rioting followed causing the main universities of Tehran to close. Strikes occurred across universities on Azar 16, Student Day, to commemorate the lives of three students who were killed on December 16th, 1953 during protests against the visit of Richard Nixon. In the final days of clashes against the Shah's government, thousands of weapons were brought to Tehran University and distributed to children as young as 10 and to adults in their 70s.

The guerrilla organizations across the Left opposing the U.S.-backed Shah of Iran were overwhelmingly made up of college students. After the

Normalistas organized strikes against austerity and demanded more resources for rural schools. On July 26, 1968 tensions came to head when students celebrating the anniversary of the Cuban Revolution converged paths with students from the National Polytechnical Institute, who were demonstrating against police repression. The crowd flipped over buses, erected barricades, and began rioting. Hundreds of thousand of people were drawn into the struggle that came next, including workers, campesinos, artists, the urban poor, political parties, and labor organizations. By August, university students sought to defend university autonomy via occupations and the coordination of democratic assemblies, creating organizations such as the National Strike Council (CNH) to organize a national movement.

The Summer Olympic Games were slated to happen in Mexico City in October of that year, and the PRI (the ruling party of Mexico at the time) escalated its repression as the games approached. The army was sent in to occupy university campuses. They arrested students indiscriminately. Some were tortured in holding. On October 2nd, 1968 during a demonstration attended by over 10,000 students against the PRI and Olympic Games in Tlatelolco, protestors were surround in the Plaza de las Tres Culturas and fired on by the military. Upwards of 500 students, journalists, passerbys, and children were killed. The Tlatelolco Massacre marked the beginning of the end of the student movement in Mexico City but the movement against repression and the PRI's policies continued elsewhere in the country. In order to advance the struggle it was deemed necessary to adopt different forms of organization. Urban armed struggle groups like The Lacondones, the Revolutionary Action Movement, and the Revolutionary Student Front were formed in reponse to the escalating State tactics. In 1969 the FLN (Forces of National Liberation), the precursor to the EZLN (Zapatista Army of National Liberation), was formed in Monterrey where the student movement continued on.

Greece

In February 1973, Law students at the University of Athens launched a strike against a military conscription law passed by the military junta and hated tyrant Georgios Papadapolous. After more than 6 years of

Can Students Start a Revolution?

In the weeks that followed, solidarity protests took place at around 140 universities, according to a tally maintained by the BBC. These protests were not conducted by students alone, and contained many faculty members and other "non-students."

Regardless of the size of the crowds or the tactics they deployed, police used batons, mace, pepper balls, rubber bullets, flash-bang grenades, and in a few instances, tear gas, to disperse the camps. In Bloomington, Indiana, campus administration called police onto the rooftops, armed with sniper rifles. Faculty, college freshmen, and journalists everywhere were clubbed, maced, and dragged down stairs. While people from all generations participated, the overwhelming majority of protesters were 18-25 years old. Horse-mounted police were deployed to multiple campuses. In Los Angeles, New York, Chicago, and Seattle, Zionists and their far right allies attacked protesters directly, hitting them with sticks, throwing fireworks, and attempting to run them over. All in all, this was not similar to other recent US-based protest movements. The images circulating on television and social media resembled scenes out of the 1960s.

Demagogues and politicians from the right and left alike repeated ad nauseam that it was the protesters who were instigating violence. The camps were denounced as "antisemitic." Aside from a few regretful exceptions, such as one instance in Berkeley when a protester painted "[Star of David] = [swastika]" on a building, this was an opportunistic lie. While suspending students, abusing protesters, and reprimanding faculty, the Board of Regents and school Presidents worked overtime to present the victims as the culprits, and to paint themselves as the true champions of social justice. University authorities did not hesitate to suspend chapters of Jewish Voices for Peace, or to unleash riot police on their members, ostensibly to keep them "safe" from the very protests they were helping to organize. Negative media representation seemed important to authorities across the country, and appears to have truly damaged the perception of the protesters by potential sympathizers across the country. For these and other reasons, the majority of the protests brought together just a few hundred participants.

Those who did mobilize used a range of rapidly evolving methods and tactics, which are worth a closer look in their own right.

Debates on Tactics

Debating tactics and attempting to popularize them is one of the primary forms of ideological struggle within contemporary protest movements and the Gaza solidarity protests were no different. Participants in social movements will be familiar with the yelling matches, tears, and gritting of teeth that sometimes accompanies these debates. On campuses, participants primarily debated about whether or not to link arms or to build barricades; whether to listen to those who were carrying megaphones, or those wearing masks; whether to resist police violence, or to avoid it. Even the method of deliberation itself became a battleground for rival factions. Some sought to generate support for their theories with call and response declarations (the "People's Mic" popularized in Occupy Wall Street), some called for meetings with formal facilitation and leadership, some preferred one-on-one deliberation, others formed clusters or break-away groups. Often the political content of the debates was drowned in the muck of "personal experience", "student leadership", and ad-hominem attacks relying heavily on the presumed privileges of competing groups.

These debates are necessary, as they determine the next steps forward for real-existing crowds and groups. Insofar as movement protagonists judge methods abstractly, according to transhistorical claims or universally-applied dogmas, they can only be correct by accident. Regardless of the specific proposals, this approach to political ideas itself is incorrect. Tactics cannot be judged in abstraction, because there is no abstract balance of forces or battlefield.

Defending the Camps

The prospect of the Columbia encampment spreading to schools across the country formed the horizon of activity. All debates on tactics took place within this strategic possibility and limit. Campus protests sought to defend the "Liberated Zones" from police and Zionists, while

APPENDIX

Nicaragua

In the late 1950s, Student-led opposition to the Somoza dictatorship in Nicaragua was most concentrated at the National Autonomous University of Nicaragua in Leon. Protest activities and agitation were spear-headed in part by students Carlos Fonseca, Tomas Borge, and Silvio Mayorge. Frustrated by the continuous and bloody suppression of campus-based resistance, they eventually founded the Frente Sandinista de Liberacion Nacional (FSLN, or "Sandinistas") in 1961. In 1979, after years of clandestine insurrectional action, the FSLN toppled the dictatorship and established a socialist-aligned independent republic. In 2018, after nearly 30 years of corruption and capitulation to neoliberal restructuring, students across Nicaragua rose up once more against the autocratic rule of former-revolutionary Daniel Ortega. They failed to topple the Ortega government, which is almost completely dependent on US-based capital and loans. Nearly 1,000 of them were gunned down in the streets.

Mexico

In 1959, the Rebel Army in Cuba had successfully overthrown the US-Backed dictator, Fulgencio Batista. The influence of the Cuban Revolution spread across the hemisphere and globe. When the CIA and US backed counter-revolutionaries invaded Cuba in 1961, the infamous Bay of Pigs, 15,000 Mexican students marched in Mexico City in solidarity with the Cuban people. In Chihuahua in 1963, after years of failed peaceful endeavors to facilitate agrarian reform, a small group of students, teachers, and campesinos organized themselves into a military formation calling themselves the "People's Guerrilla Group." In 1965 they attacked the Madera military Barracks, hoping to catalyze a broader revolt. The assault was a failure but the heroism of their efforts would inspire other guerrilla experiments in the preceding years, most notably, the Liga Comunista 23 de Septiembre.

In 1965, thousands of medical students demonstrated in Mexico City.

productive interrelation between anti-colonial revolution, Black resistance, and student anti-war activism. The world today may not be so different. Angry and aspiring people must look to struggles in places like Bangladesh, where student protesters have resorted to burning police stations, looting armories, and turning campuses into barracks for new popular organizations. We must look to the strategies and needs of Burmese students, who have turned to the national liberation armies in the Myanmar hinterlands for training, education, and alliances against the military dictatorship. We must articulate the structural links connecting counterrevolution overseas and at home, and find ways to turn awareness of those links into a revolutionary fighting force capable of basic, if difficult, tasks.

Doing so requires that aspiring revolutionaries disabuse themselves and others of exceptionalist and chauvinistic ideology. Americans are not immune from resistance. White people, students, and other privileged people do not have the right to stand by "in solidarity" with liberation struggles here and abroad, cheering them on without sharing any of their risks. Still, we cannot chide and ridicule those who have yet to embrace militant struggle. Forms of resistance must be arranged to protagonize today's bystanders, spectators, onlookers, and fence-sitters. While they may not form the core of any serious resistance, and they may not be relied on to conduct necessary tasks and roles within a revolutionary organization and movement, it is from their ranks that an insurrection will actually recruit and depend. In order to do this, organizers will have to reject frameworks that require ongoing informed consent among participants, ultra-democratic orientations which divide action into "risk-based" roles and segments, and other forms of scripted and organized activist choreography. They will have to embrace street fighting, pitched battles, barricades, rock-throwing, and highway blockades as their general strategy. These are not the only forms resistance can take, but without them, no other methods can retain their meaning or dignity any longer.

simultaneously turning the camps into centers of mutual aid, group deliberation, political education, and chanting. It is not clear why, since the "negotiations" between student bureaucrats and university authorities were a gross and demoralizing ruse, but the protesters seemed to believe that establishing encampments would give them leverage against their respective authorities on the question of support for the Israeli war against Gaza. Students and their allies thought that universities form a central pillar of the Israeli war in Palestine, or at least attempted to foment widespread resistance under that premise.

The political meaning of the protests was clarified by the clashes between protesters and police; not only by the slogans, statements, and demands produced by the students. Everywhere that protesters failed to engage in active or passive physical confrontations with the police, we can say that nothing really happened, even where protesters had developed coherent and interesting statements and goals. The real question posed by the events focuses us on the role of American civilians in opposing US imperialism in Palestine. What could they do, and what would they risk to do so?

Most encampments were short-lived, facing police attacks and violence in an hour or less. This had a serious effect on what protesters could do or imagine, and locked them inside a framework of defense. As squads of helmeted riot police ambushed camps in the early morning hours with clubs and mace, the Gaza Solidarity Encampments defended themselves in almost every way an unarmed movement could. Most camps opted for passive resistance to arrest by linking arms and constructing barricades. Some were more active; they shoved the police, threw objects, or blocked the cruisers taking arrestees to jail.

Many did not stop at grassy fields and plazas. Courageous people occupied school buildings, barricading and/or locking themselves inside. These were polarizing actions because they disrupted the ability of the University function as normal. Those who took this route circulated tactical guides and reports from student protesters in New York and California of 2009/2010, who repeatedly occupied classroom buildings in militant struggles against budget cuts. Moving the arena of protest from outside to inside substantially confuses the logistics and potentials for a police incursion. The decision to take over buildings delayed the question

of direct clashes and was often done in anticipation of a raid or in retaliation for one.

Social media timelines and news coverage were occasionally filled with images of tear gas, flash-bang grenades, broken windows, fireworks, and bottles flying through the air. These are the images one should hope to see within a country that is arming and funding a genocide.

Clashes with police aside, there was very little property destruction on campuses across the country, despite the insistence by protesters that the schools were directly responsible for the war. There are a few exceptions: at UC Berkeley, a police car was burned, and a building was attacked via molotov cocktail (justified actions for which an anarchist named Casey Goonan is accused, following a multi-house raid in the Bay Area in mid-June); at CSULA, the administration building was trashed; at Portland State University, the library was ransacked; at Cal Poly Humboldt, most of the campus buildings were taken over and extensively redecorated. All of these actions took place on the West Coast.

In the long run, passive or active resistance to sweeps yielded the same results: camps were evicted and the protests and marches subsided once again. This is not because the protesters lacked bravery. It is because they were trapped in a defensive cycle, unable to reclaim the initiative.

Can Self-Defense Work?

Self-defense as a framework has been liquidated by the real march of events. The 2011 Occupy Wall Street-inspired protests, the huge resistance camp to the Dakota Access Pipeline at Standing Rock in 2016, the small but militant Occupy ICE encampments in 2018, the "autonomous zones" of the 2020 George Floyd uprising, and to a lesser extent, the wooded-urban stop Cop City encampments, have all demonstrated, exhaustively and irrefutably, that as long as the police are permitted to retreat, they will eventually surround and destroy place-based resistance. The Gaza Solidarity Encampments can be added to this beautiful albeit tragic list of defeats for "territorial" US protest movements.

In a defensive framework for action, groups do not avail themselves of their strongest tools: mobility, omnipresence in society, the element of surprise, etc. Static bases of resistance surrender the initiative to the

and angry people in order to succeed, it is not clear how else those alliances can be formed, since the organized groups and organizations alone cannot be trusted, as previous protest movements have already made clear.

This is a similar dilemma confronting radical campaigns and localized revolts elsewhere. In the current globalized capitalist world, few movements are able to apply the leverage they need to win, since the bosses of the world are able to continuously flee direct confrontation with those they exploit. With few exceptions, only the lightning action of angry and fierce crowds have been able to win serious reforms, or to topple local governments. What does not advance, retreats; since there are no ellipses in history, no pauses in the global confrontation of forces. Activism, coordinated actions, and planned initiatives are not by themselves able to advance the Gaza solidarity protests any further.

On the other hand, to embrace "mass resistance," "mass revolt," and generalized disorder as discrete concepts is essentially worthless. The world does not need any more people who comfort themselves with the deferral of real action by appealing to hypothetical aspirations and dreams. Activist groups, aspiring revolutionaries, and organizers can only solve problems of a certain scale, questions which can be resolved by a coordination and unity of will, inspiration, and dedication. The question of the mass, spontaneous, rebellion is a good general orientation when imagining tactics, but is not helpful when resistance is difficult or unpopular. Intentional groups can take over buildings, destroy property, and stage disruptions, but they cannot open the floodgates of insurrectional action similar to the George Floyd uprising.

So what can be done? Already, revolutionary journalists and writers are working around the clock to shift public perception away from the jingoistic and racist support for the war. Tacticians and anarchists are introducing technical sophistication into the movement; methods best suited for crowds and riots as well as forms of sabotage and clandestine action. The onus to apply pressure on university administrations by constructing protest camps on quads and plazas of schools has exhausted whatever usefulness it may have had. This does not mean others will not attempt to do the same thing again once school starts back up this Fall.

The revolutionary politics of the 1960s gives an example of a

Humboldt, where protesters took over the entire campus, a long dedication to Tortugueta was painted on a wall. In Tucson, where a "Week of Action" against Nationwide Insurance, the company providing insurance for the construction of Cop City, took place in February of this year, University of Arizona students chanted "Stop Cop City" as they threw bottles at police during the raid on the Gaza Solidarity Encampment. Multiple acts of nocturnal sabotage and vandalism across the country have been accompanied by claims of responsibilities that reference both the Cop City resistance, and the war on Gaza.

If student anti-war protesters hope to continue playing a decisive role in US history in general, and in fighting the US-backed genocide in Gaza in particular, they would do well to legitimize participation of exactly these forces. Campus organizers should chase that participation and work hard to create a situation in which these forces, most of whom are not students, would be welcome, rather than smugly chase them off campus. Similarly, those of us who are not enrolled in universities would do well to consider fighting alongside students on campus, rather than in obscure industrial or logistical corridors. It could make just as much sense to open vortices of subversion within the campuses themselves, welcoming "non-students," anarchists, abolitionists, poor Black people, migrants, and others onto the campuses for carnivals of refusal and action. If these institutions are developing the weapons, if they are conducting the research, if they are training the personnel, if they are manufacturing the consent, then it is not the privilege of students and faculty alone to challenge them. In fact, it is the right and obligation of all people of conscience to swarm the universities, and to stop the war where it is cultivated before it is dropped on the heads of the Palestinians in Gaza.

Bringing the War Home

The tactical and strategic framework of the students allowed the Palestine solidarity movement to grow, while also preventing it from spreading further. In order to end US imperialism in Palestine and elsewhere, a program of generalized disorder may be the only option. If these protests require participation among poor Black people, anarchists,

police, who have all of the time they need to plan a counter-attack, to be carried out when it most suits them. Courage, militancy, and numerical superiority can not change this dynamic. So why does this form of protest reappear continuously in the United States?

Urban encampments recur because they solve political problems for those who fight. Participants of social movements in the US generally are not members of organizations, do not have access to an active community or base, and do not have material aid or experience taking action. In other words, they have no "rear" to retreat to or rely on in the course of their correct and creative disruptions of the status quo. They do not have a reliable network of people to think through and reflect on political action with. Camps, "occupations," and other protest sites solve these problems by bringing motivated participants together with the time and space to solve these issues on the fly. Without enduring and flexible grassroots organizations, cultural movements, collectives, affinity groups, organizing hubs, social centers, or bookstores, mass struggles will continue to rely on this form of protest. Those who hope to move the paradigm of strategic defense to strategic offense will have to develop 21st century organizational proposals that allow large numbers of angry people to coordinate resources without having to build an ad-hoc "headquarters" amidst the front lines

This conundrum is not transhistorical. It is a problem that belongs to our era. The George Floyd protests did not require this kind of convergence until they were already in decline. When protagonists of social change can call on a great cross-section of society alongside communities that possess collective assets and gathering spaces, they can readily embrace offensive strategies. They do not have to also defend their shared assets while they are marching, chanting, blockading, or rioting.

The Gaza solidarity movement found a way to solve some political problems by mobilizing students. Now those students face challenges they must resolve if they aspire to pose a serious threat to the war.

PART II: STUDENTS NEED ALLIES: A LOOK AT THE OLD STUDENT MOVEMENT

In the US imaginary, the identity of movement protagonists is a uniquely significant factor for the perceived legitimacy of struggles. More than elsewhere, the social position of protestors determines whether and how people will support a movement, and what means can be reasonably brought to bear against participants without provoking further acts of resistance. The compositional question (i.e. "who are the protesters?") is at least as important to determining the perceived legitimacy of a movement as its stated goals or methods.

Although all social movements in the US contain students in high percentage of overall participation, the description of the campus protests as a "student movement" is instructive. Students are widely believed to have the right to protest and the right to make their voices heard, to act out, to express themselves. This is especially true on university campuses. Insisting that events were the efforts of "outsiders" is how detractors hoped to discredit the protests. Even though in some places the majority of arrestees were community members (so-called "non-students" or "outsiders"), this did not significantly impact the perception of these protests as "student-led" by those who were already primed to support them.

Some right wing commentators have insisted that the protests were the logical consequence of "Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion" policies, of "critical race theory," and the supposed "marxist" leanings of the official intelligentsia. They hope this framing will position them better to censor books, blacklist free thinkers, and purge the American higher education system of all persons and programs critical of the status quo. If the suppression of independent and subversive ideas are under attack in public schools across the country, it is because students are among the most undomesticated and rebellious layers of class-based societies, and the need to confuse and demoralize them is particularly strong among certain layers of the ruling class. The need to isolate them from other insurrectionary layers of the population is also strong, thus the "outside agitator" trope.

clashes with the police. In some places, including Portland where the revolt endured the longest, the majority of the rioters were white. This kind of participation is unprecedented. This did not happen in the 1960s, when Black people fought with few allies against racist mobs and the National Guard, occasionally counting on the support of hundreds or maybe a few thousand white revolutionaries for support. This did not happen in the 2014-2016 Black Lives Matter riots in Ferguson or elsewhere. While many white people participated in marches against the killing of Michael Brown, Philando Castile, Alton Sterling, and Kimani Gray, the poor Black people resisting the volleys of teargas could only count on a small number of white anarchists to join them. In fact, the correct and justified participation of white insurrectionists in those riots was often denounced, rejected, and policed by leftists.

The Defend the Atlanta Forest/Stop Cop City movement represents the intentional consolidation and organization of the George Floyd uprising into an enduring common sense, as far as the left is concerned. It is the culmination of lessons, skills, networks, and efforts of the radical environmentalist movement and the anti-police protests of the last decade. In the Stop Cop City movement, white militants have demonstrated that they are still willing to take great risks to attack and destroy the racial state, even outside the context of mass spontaneous upheaval. A cursory glance of the arrest records from that movement makes clear that of the 100+ arrests in general, and of the 61 facing the most serious charges of Racketeering, scarcely a small handful are not white people.

Militant protesters in the Gaza Solidarity Encampments came disproportionately from the ranks of the Defend the Forest/Stop Cop City movement. Even those who did not participate in protests in Atlanta drew on its legacy symbolically when they aspired to militant action. Direct participation and symbolic inspiration alike funneled slogans, tactics, and insights from one movement into the next, indirectly connecting the Palestine protests with the George Floyd revolt, with the Cop City movement acting as a discursive bridge between the two.

Chants of "Stop Cop City" could be heard in tandem with pro-Palestinian chants. A banner with a portrait of Tortugueta decorated the facade of Columbia University during the encampment there. At Cal Poly

required to build the revolution. We cannot satisfy ourselves by blaming the opportunists, the reformers, and the cowards.

So why do protest movements spread? Why do new groups join protests? If the organizations do not lead the spontaneous mass movements, but rather smother them; if the informal groups do not consolidate their leadership, even as their methods attract public attention, then this question is more complicated than it seems. If inviting some groups to a meeting or developing shared plans is not enough to assure that movements grow, then aspiring revolutionaries in the Gaza solidarity movement will have to consider how and why the students came to participate in the first place, given that they were not all invited individually, and were not primarily participating in organizing structures operating "in coalition" with one another.

From our vantage point, it seems that struggles spread insofar as they give people a way to channel their frustrations into meaningful collective action, to use the skills and relationships they already have, and to participate in meaningful historic events. In essence, most people participate in spontaneous mass movements because in them we feel powerful. We feel that with our own actions we can change the world, and change our own lives. It is not easy to measure or provoke this feeling with banners, slogans, or planned disruptions. When it comes to empowering others, we must admit that there are many factors outside of our control. Despite the certainty and calculations of some, to spread resistance is more of an art form than a science, and it requires as much creativity and tact as precision and focus.

In recent years, only one moment blew open the lid on self-activity, pulling together an enormous cross section of the public in an episode of popular unrest and radical action at a scale appropriate to the rottenness of our times.

The Fighters

The George Floyd Rebellion announced a new chapter in US history. According to the New York Times, 25 million people participated in protests against the racist killings of Black people by law enforcement. For the first time, several million white people joined Black people in riots and

This double-bind, between the pro-"student movement" camp and the pro-"outside agitator" camp, formed a subtle but devastating trap for the protesters, most of whom opted to assert the "student-led" nature of the protests. By continuing to invest their creativity and energies on campuses, and by legitimizing the protests on the basis of their real or imagined "student leadership," protesters missed some chances to build the participation of rebellious social layers that are systematically excluded or marginalized within higher education and city centers, including poor people and Black people. Decades of budget cuts and tuition hikes have insured that Black students and other racialized student groups are not usually from the same class as their historic forbearers, and are more likely to be from the same middle-income backgrounds as some of their white classmates. Racialized students also joined the conservatizing factions of the recent protests.

Every existing form of legitimacy excludes just as it includes. In the case of "student protests," often what is excluded is exactly what is needed in order for struggles to succeed. A look at the student movement in the 1960s-70s illustrates most clearly what can be accomplished when students build movements that protagonize non-students just as much as they protagonize themselves.

A Shared History

In the 1950s, amid a groundswell of independence movements in Africa, rapid post-war economic expansion, and the Brown v. the Board of Education ruling (which ruled against the segregation of schools), the US Civil Rights movement grew. Many influential student organizers and groups of the following decades had their earliest political experiences in pickets and sit-ins, voter registration drives, and armed confrontations with mobs of white racists within the context of that movement.

The global left wing movements underwent a serious political and cultural paradigm shift in the 1960s. The factory-centric ideas and the parties of the old Left were ignored or rejected by the new generation of activists, who turned instead to the anti-colonial movements abroad, and the Black movement at home, for influence and leadership. US involvement in Vietnam was escalating, embroiling many American

households in serious crises and debate. The enduring successes of the Cuban and Algerian revolutions catalyzed new theories of action and organization in the global far left, confused or demoralized as many were by the state capitalist administration of the Soviet Union, which had embraced a geopolitical policy of "Peaceful Coexistence" with the US-led capitalist bloc.

The Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) and the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) were both founded in 1960. In the years that followed, these two groups would become the leading organizations of a nationwide movement. Even those developing their ideas, theories, and plans outside of the meeting minutes cannot deny the influence these two organizations had on our society. These groups expressed and cultivated the new ideas developing across the country.

Some Black SDS members at Ohio Central State College came together to form a splinter organization on their campus, which they named Challenge. In 1962, through student organizing efforts, Challenge decided to take over the student government at Central State and to dissolve itself into another organization, which they called the Revolutionary Action Movement (RAM). Through the influence of various anti-colonial thinkers, RAM developed a revolutionary Black nationalist politics and worked to develop the connection between the Black struggles in US and the anticolonial struggles for independence around the world. According to RAM, Black people in the US constituted a "captive nation" and an "internal colony" within the United States. Because of this, they have a unique task in world history: to overthrow the white supremacist state from within it.

In the Summer of 1963, confrontations between civil rights protesters and white southern police forces escalated. Riots against racist police brutality, white-nationalist attacks, and segregation broke out in Alabama, North Carolina, and Georgia. In August, the famous march on Washington brought out 250,000 people who peacefully demonstrated for labor and civil rights, organized by Martin Luther King Jr., the Southern Christian Labor Conference (SCLC), SNCC, CORE (Congress of Racial Equality), and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). In 1964, riots again spread across the country, in New York, New Jersey, and then back across the South, in Florida and Jackson,

protests and riots between 2010 and now, these organized groups had no clear way of participating in spontaneous movements; if they did, they usually constrained, misdirected, and repressed them. Many groups, especially the large NGOs, tailed the riots completely, being "caught off guard" by them, year after year. Opportunists of one sort busied themselves "base building": passing out fliers and knocking on doors, staging photo-ops for their donors. Opportunists of another sort introduced tactics and trainings that could in no way advance the unfolding disarray. We have seen with our own eyes as activists lead die-ins just blocks from riots. We have also seen break-away marches lead dozens to break a few windows while huge mobs of young people loot stores and shoot guns at police.

In nearly every case we can think of, left wing groups did not meaningfully insert a revolutionary ideology or program into the movements just as they have not pushed their tactical or strategic development. Many groups do not even believe that doing so is valuable, possible, or ethical. As a matter of course, many activists, organizers, socialists, anarchists, and others believe they do not have the right to push movements, and incorrectly believe that their chronic tailism is an asset or testament to their moral uprightness.

Most of the leading forces in these revolts are spontaneously and informally organized groups of friends with no name or joinable structure, street gangs, or DIY cultural spaces. These informal or apolitical groups generally haven't pushed a revolutionary program, even if they popularize insurrectional tactics. They have regularly asserted themselves at the frontlines of clashes with police, and thus formed the tactical avant-garde of social struggles: collectively taking the biggest risks and determining the direction of the revolts as a result. Over and again, these layers were themselves overwhelmed in the course of events, failing to retain tactical or strategic leadership after a few days or weeks. As the left wing groups and large non-profits re-oriented themselves to the new balance of forces, especially after the most courageous are arrested or injured, they have consistently found methods for regaining control or influence over events, advancing conciliatory proposals, slogans, frameworks, and tactics. It is the fault of aspiring revolutionaries that this recurs continuously, for it is our duty to develop the autonomous forces

PART III: WHO WILL FIGHT WITH THE STUDENTS?

In recent years, protests lead by students have had an outsize influence on social movements in general, often preceding them by about a year. The 2009-2010 campus occupations movement in New York and California is widely regarded as the tactical predecessor to the Wisconsin Capitol occupation, and the subsequent Occupy Wall Street movement, which brought together millions. During the Trump presidency, many serious confrontations between far right wing agitators and antifascists took place on college campuses. In both cases, and there are certainly more examples, the strength of the student protests was determined by the extent to which they could mobilize additional layers of society outside of universities.

The Palestine solidarity movement has so far not made the relevant connections to other layers of society that could help it to grow and sharpen. Why not?

How is it that struggles broaden to begin with? Specifically, how can participants of social struggles protagonize groups they are not a part of, or populations that are not spontaneously drawn into a given fight? Just as mostly white students joined and augmented the Jewish, Muslim, and Arab anti-war protests of October-March, we might ask what the student protesters can do to drive participation from anarchists, Black people, and angry people outside of the campuses in general. To answer this, we should place the "student intifada" in the context of other US-based protest movements.

Twilight of the Organizers

When we think of "relating" two struggles together, we cannot describe a purely formal affiliation, a kind of joint-action and sympathy that exists in a coalition of organizations and collectives. Aside from the undeniable fact that most rebellious people are not members of any activist groups or organizations, most of those who have hardly helped to advance struggles toward a revolutionary horizon. In the

Mississippi. Black people, lead by Black students, were quickly moving to the center of national attention in politics, as a consequence of their participation within these revolts.

In 1965, after the "Gulf of Tonkin" incident, the number of Americans drafted into the Vietnam war doubled. The student anti-war movement grew. As it grew, it also developed a more radical line, mirroring and referencing the new and militant frameworks developing in the Black struggle. In April of 1965, SDS called for the first national anti-war demonstration in Washington, DC. 20,000 people came. The organization's popularity boomed. By the end of Summer, there were over a hundred chapters.

On August 11th, 1965, the Watts neighborhood of Los Angeles exploded. A week of rioting, armed clashes with police, arson, and looting crossed the city. The entire world looked on, stunned by the scenes of destruction and revolt. Many compared the events in Watts to urban guerrilla warfare. RAM encouraged Black people in the US to identify with the Vietnamese National Liberation Front. Police officials reported on the Watts riots similarly, comparing the rioters to the Viet Cong. There were reports of sniper fire in the streets, helicopters were reportedly shot at, and hundreds of buildings were destroyed.

RAM, comprised at the time of mostly students and artists, participated in the Watts rebellion. Members from LA met up with members from as far away as New Jersey in the smoldering streets. In the period that followed, membership in their secretive organization grew to 3,000, according to founding member Muhammad Ahmad. They still needed a way to interface with the public however. In 1966, the Black Panther Party was conceived of in Harlem, NY, inspired by the Lowndes County Freedom Organization, operating in Lowndes County, Alabama. Unlike RAM, the Party was intended to be a mass organization, open to the public. Through public organizing drives, this New York organization grew to 300 members. Later that year, through their participation in Soul Students Advisory Council (a RAM front group) on Merritt College campus, Huey Newton and Bobby Seale founded the Oakland-based Black Panther Party for Self Defense. In the following years, it grew to 5,000 full-time members.

The Columbia University chapter of the Students for a Democratic

Society was founded in 1966, the same year as the Panthers. It was an outgrowth of a group called the Independent Committee on Vietnam. At least three of the founding members, David Gilbert, Ted Gold, and John Jacobs, later joined the Weather Underground. At the time, student activism at Columbia took aim at the Institute for Defense Analysis program on campus, a Department of Defense program on counter-insurgency in Vietnam and its potential relevance to US police departments. When Marines came to Columbia in 1967 to recruit, the Columbia SDS chapter organized a demonstration to stop it. When demonstrators confronted the Marines, they were attacked by a group of reactionary students. Fighting against racism and imperialism pitted white activists in conflict with white reactionaries, forcing them to clarify their position with respect to the relative privileges their skin color afforded them: to embrace those privileges by remaining docile, or to challenge them by toppling the system that administers them.

A Long, Hot Summer

On April 1, 1967, riots broke out in Omaha, with Black teenagers fighting police and looting stores. The next day, Stokely Carmichael was censored at Tennessee State University in Nashville, and rioting commenced immediately. In the days, weeks, and months that followed, riots spread to over 160 cities in a sequence known as the "Long, Hot Summer." Censorship or scandals surrounding or involving SNCC were frequent precipitating factors. No part of the country was spared: Black youth, very often students, fought police in Tampa, Waterloo, Atlanta, Des Moines, Lansing, Dayton, Philadelphia, Boston, San Francisco, Houston, Minneapolis, Hattiesburg, Tucson, Cairo, Poughkeepsie, Seattle, Pasadena, and far beyond. Only the 2020 George Floyd rebellion can claim a more widespread distribution of rebellion.

In July 1967, the moment reached its climax. In Newark and Detroit, the riots became authentic armed insurrections, pitting the Black proletariat against the National Guard. Hundreds of thousands of people participated in these risings, mostly without formal membership in any organization or association. Revolutionary groups like RAM participated in an organized way, using urban guerrilla tactics and mobilizing military

movements across the globe had formed around the country. Days of rioting after the raid of the Stonewall Inn gave shape to the gay and trans-liberation movement that had been growing since the mid 60s. Revolutionary feminist organizations sprouted across the US and informed the character and ideology of existing radical groups, like the Weather Underground Organization, the George Jackson Brigade, the Diggers, and more.

In the end, these movements, uprisings, and groups were unable to overthrow the US racial state, to curb US imperialist adventures, to topple capitalism, or to root out machismo and patriarchy. They did manage to initiate forms of struggle that would later be imitated by workers, students, and women across Europe in the later half of the 1970s. For us, they have shown the necessity of forming alliances and working hard to build unity between different subversive and confrontational segments of society.

The 1960s saw a higher level of militancy and participation than our contemporary struggles and on that basis were closer to initiating a veritable social revolution. Knowing this, we can still look to that period for lessons and cautionary tales. Still, participants of more recent protests have learned all of their own lessons. To understand what to do next, we need to also metabolize those lessons. We have to judge them with rigor and clarity, without the nostalgia sometimes grafted onto the distant past, or the dogma often applied to our own experiences.

Intelligence Program (COINTELPRO). As SDS sought to urgently clarify its relationship to Black nationalism and the Vietnamese national liberation struggle, its members split into rival camps, eventually breaking down completely in 1969. The segment that sympathized most aggressively with anti-colonial and Black nationalist theories and movements became known as Weatherman. Other factions, including a faction known as Revolutionary Youth Movement II, also sympathized with the Black uprisings, but differed significantly with Weather on the role white people could or should play in the course of the revolution, advocating an integrated and unified movement, contrasting with Weather, who aimed to build a "white fighting force" against racism.

SNCC, the other leading student organization of the 1960s, was in a terminal crisis at the same time. Following the resignation of Carmichael and then Brown from national leadership (both advocates for Black Power and closer integration with the Panthers post-Watts), the organization could no longer resist the recruitment of its remaining leadership into the Democratic Party or other middle class groups. With the radical flank gone, and the liberal wing in retreat, SNCC was over by the end of 1969.

The dissolution of these two mass student organizations did not end resistance to oppression and war in the US at first. When students were killed by National Guardsmen at Kent State University on May 4, 1970, a wave of riots, demonstrations, occupations, and bombings shook the country. A student strike involving more than 4 million people spread across more than 800 schools. Over 100,000 people filled the streets of Washington DC, burning cars and fighting police, prompting President Nixon to evacuate the White House from a scene he described as a "civil war." The president was being hyperbolic, however. In just a few days, the rebellion was over.

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Black radical organizations and anti-war activists of the 1960s, both of which relied heavily on the activity and leadership of university students, constructed a near-revolutionary movement by joining forces. By the time of the Kent State Massacre in 1970, revolutionary nationalist organizations inspired by the Black Panther Party and national liberation

cadres in coordinated initiatives. In Newark, more than two dozen people were killed by authorities; 8,000 state troopers and National Guardsmen were called to contain the conflagration which had spread to more than 10 nearby cities, including Middlesex, where an arms factory was looted by insurgents. In Detroit, 43 people were killed. The insurgents controlled nearly the entire city, using sniper fire and ambushes to repel and even to kill National Guardsmen. Resistance spread to at least 9 surrounding cities, with Guardsmen receiving clearance to "shoot to kill." Over \$45 million in damages was reported (modern equivalent of \$411 million) in Detroit alone.

The next year, in 1968, Robert F. Williams, as International Chairman of RAM, visited Hanoi. There, he offered a toast of congratulations to NLF General Vo Nguyen Giap on the success of the Tet offensive, in which 85,000 NLF guerrillas launched surprise attacks on US bases in over 100 cities in southern Vietnam. General Giap, toasting him back, congratulated Williams saying, "We learned from Detroit to go to the cities."

On February 8th, 1968 clashes broke out on South Carolina State College's campus where students protested against racial segregation at a local bowling alley. Police fired on demonstrators, killing 3 Black students and injuring dozens more. This marked the first time in US history university students were killed by the police on a college campus. Tragically, it would not be the last.

Returning to campuses for the new semester, student organizers met frequently to plan their next moves in the climate of nationwide Black rebellion. On March 27th, SDS members staged a sit-in at the Low Library on Columbia campus, demanding the abolition of the Institute for Defensive Analysis program. Six of them were later suspended for violating campus rules. The National Council of SDS met and decided to convene coordinated anti-war actions in April at as many campuses as possible. SDS Columbia at the time represented the biggest faction at the National Council meeting.

Then, unexpectedly, on April 4th, Martin Luther King, Jr. was assassinated.

Holy Week Uprising

In the wake of the tragic killing, riots again engulfed more than 100 cities. The murder of King was a serious tide-shift for the US public, Black and white alike. The response was clearest in the Midwest, South, and East Coast, though notably there was no major upheaval in New York City. All in all, 40 people were killed and over 20,000 were arrested. SNCC members called for demonstrations around the country. In Washington, D.C., following a SNCC-led rally, tens of thousands of people began breaking windows, setting fires, looting stores, and clashing with police. The Marine Corps was called in to guard the Capitol. The Army 3rd Infantry was mobilized to defend the White House. Not since the Civil War had scenes of such great unrest rocked the nations capitol. 1,200 buildings were burned to the ground. In Chicago, 5,000 soldiers were deployed to assist the 10,000 police and 6,000 National Guardsmen. In Baltimore, H. Rap Brown, then-chairman of SNCC, was seen driving around urging crowds of people to take desperately-needed action. The resulting uprising caused tens of millions of dollars in damages.

For the second summer in a row, poor Black people, often led by Black student groups like SNCC, had initiated nationwide insurrections and armed revolts all by themselves. In both cases, they had failed to overthrow the government, or to institute a revolutionary program by other means. What was clear beyond a doubt, is that the death of King meant the death of nonviolent resistance.

Sit-in at Low Library, Occupation of Columbia

In the context of the King assassination and subsequent revolt, Columbia students gathered on campus, determined to take action. SDS organizers handed out leaflets at an administration-sponsored event commemorating Dr. King, denouncing the hypocrisy of the administration for continuously refusing to recognize the rights of Black and Puerto Rican cafeteria staff to unionize. SDS planned a demonstration on April 23 alongside Students' Afro-American Society (SAS) and CORE to oppose the construction of a new university gymnasium in nearby Harlem. The April 23rd protest also demanded that the university drop

the sanctions against the 6 protesters who sat-in at the Low Library a month earlier, just before the Holy Week Uprising.

Hundreds gathered at the Low Library, where they were blocked by police and reactionaries. They switched directions, marching towards the new gym in Harlem. Clashes with police broke out as demonstrators tore down fencing at the construction site. When police reinforcements arrived, demonstrators again changed plans, making way for Hamilton Hall. They stormed the building, flooding into its atriums, hallways, stairwells, and classrooms. Dean Henry Coleman was taken hostage by students, announced by SDS organizer and future Weatherman Mark Rudd. Up Against the Wall Motherfuckers!, an armed group based in the Lower East Side, took over the Mathematics building. Others occupied the Architecture building. Black students retained sole occupancy of Hamilton Hall, so that participants with different aims and tactics could operate without stepping on each others' toes.

A week later, on April 30, 1968, 1,000 police officers gathered and assaulted the campus. The SAS students in Hamilton Hall negotiated through lawyers to be released without violence. The other buildings were raided. NYPD arrested over 700 students, faculty, and "non-students" alike. They fired tear gas onto campus and beat protesters with clubs.

Despite the arrests, the occupation of Columbia was a success. The Institute for Defense Analysis was kicked off campus, and the plans for the gymnasium in Harlem were cancelled.

The recent eviction of the Hamilton Hall occupation of 2024 took place on the 50th year anniversary of the 1968 eviction.

After King, After Columbia

In the fall of 1968, there were around 41 bombings on college campuses. In the 1969-1970 school year, there were 5,000.

The attitude of young people continued to change. The majority of youth claimed to desire a "revolution" to correct American society's many ills. In the context of repeated uprisings by the country's Black working classes, and the rising militancy of the student anti-war movement, the federal government escalated its repressive campaign, deploying a counter-revolutionary operation against leftists known as the Counter